DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 432 052 EA 029 918

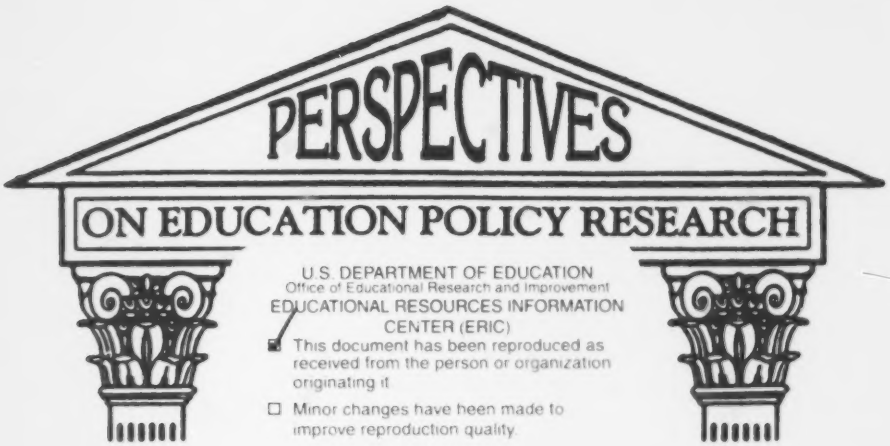
TITLE	Effective Leaders for Today's Schools: Synthesis of a Policy Forum on Educational Leadership. Perspectives on Education Policy Research. Policy Brief.
INSTITUTION	National Inst. on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management (ED/OERI), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	GFI-1999-9501
ISBN	ISBN-0-16-050063-X
PUB DATE	1999-06-00
NOTE	45p.; Forum was held in Washington, DC, January 22-23, 1998.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328; ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; Web site: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html; Tel: 877-433-7827 (Toll Free); TTY/TTD: 877-576-7734; Fax: 301-470-1244.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021) -- Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Effectiveness; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; Leadership Responsibility; *Leadership Training; Management Development; Policy Formation; *School Administration

ABSTRACT

This booklet explores the major issues involved in creating effective leadership for today's schools. It summarizes the deliberations of 43 participants involved in a 2-day forum on educational leadership. Participants included superintendents, principals, and teachers from urban, suburban, and rural school districts, as well as prominent researchers in education leadership, state policymakers, education consultants, professional development specialists, education officials, and others. The forum used a seminar approach in which leading practitioners and researchers made brief presentations that included information about successful schools and districts; the presentations were followed by discussions that focused on select questions, such as What is the definition of an effective leader for today's schools? and Which practices do successful leaders use to improve teaching and learning? The forum found that educational leaders' jobs are changing dramatically and that today's schools demand new kinds of skills and knowledge from leaders, including skills that many current educators have not mastered. Successful districts around the U.S. are testing new models of leadership that bring together superintendents and others to do cross-role work on improving instruction. Some newer, effective models for professional development give people practical opportunities to build instructional leadership and other important skills in real school contexts. Contains a list of participants. (RJM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 432 052



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Policy Brief

Effective Leaders for Today's Schools: Synthesis of a Policy Forum on Educational Leadership

The National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

EA 029 918

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Policy Brief

Effective Leaders for Today's Schools: Synthesis of a Policy Forum on Educational Leadership

The National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley
Secretary

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
C. Kent McGuire
Assistant Secretary

National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management
Barbara Lieb
Acting Director

Media and Information Services
Cynthia Hearn Dorfman
Director

June 1999

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education.

To obtain copies of this report (while supplies last) or ordering information on other U.S. Department of Education products, call toll-free 1–877–4ED–Pubs (877–433–7827) or write

Education Publications Center (ED Pubs)
U.S. Department of Education
P.O. Box 1398
Jessup, MD 20794–1398

TTY/TTD 1–877–576–7734
FAX 301–470–1244

Online ordering via the Internet: ***http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html***
Copies are available in alternate formats upon request.

For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328
ISBN 0-16-050063-X

Foreword

The Policy Forum on Educational Leadership was convened to answer the question: what needs to be done to improve the quality of leadership of the education system for the next century? The recommendations outlined at the end of this policy brief are the product of 2 days of intense discussion by over 40 leading experts in the field of leadership. These findings and the discussion summarized here should provide a firm base for those interested in improving leadership in education to begin their own deliberations and endeavors.

This policy brief owes much to the efforts of Deborah Inman, the former Director of the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management. Inman saw the importance of strong leadership in helping to shape and carry out the many elements of reform necessary to effect real change in American education. The Policy Forum, which this brief reports on, was the product of her imagination and efforts in identifying the problem and convening the right group of people to address that problem.

That group of people, including state policymakers, education consultants, professional development specialists, representatives of foundations and school reform groups, association leaders representing school boards, school administrators, principals and teachers, and U.S. Department of Education officials, contributed their time and wisdom in addressing this critical element of reform.*

Special thanks go to Richard Elmore of Harvard University and Anthony Alvarado of Community School District #2, New York City for their insights and suggestions in planning this Forum. Also contributing their thoughtful perspectives during the planning phase were Edwin Bridges of Stanford University and Mary Russo of the Boston Public Schools. Paul Schwarz, Principal in Residence at the U.S. Department of Education, provided singular guidance in identifying participants for the Forum.

*Participants in the meeting are listed at the end of this document.

Participants addressed definitions of leadership, successful practices, changing professional development needs, and the research and policy implications of new ways of thinking about leadership. The policy brief summarizes the main ideas and suggestions made by the forum participants in a way that, we hope, makes this stimulating 2-day seminar accessible to readers.

Contents

Foreword iii

Why a Policy Forum on Leadership? 1

Purpose and Structure of the Policy Forum 2

What Is Effective Leadership for Today's Schools? 4

How Can We Change Practice to Strengthen Leadership? 9

How Can We Change Professional Development to Strengthen the Skills of Current Leaders? 12

How Can We Prepare New Leaders? 15

What Are the Implications for Research? 19

What Are the Implications for Policy? 21

Summary and Conclusion 26

Participants in the Policy Forum on Educational Leadership 28

Why a Policy Forum on Leadership?

Recent reforms in education have focused much energy on improving instruction and increasing the knowledge and skills of classroom teachers. But these same reform efforts have often overlooked an equally important lever for educational change—the nature and quality of leadership provided by school principals, superintendents, and school board members.

The principal has considerable influence over the environment in the school building, where the most meaningful actions in education take place. A good principal can create a climate that fosters excellent teaching and learning, while an ineffective one can quickly thwart the progress of the most dedicated reformers.

The superintendent is the highly visible figure on the front lines of education who articulates the vision for and oversees the activities of a large organization. Today's superintendents not only must be skilled in their interactions with the school board, principals, and teachers, but also must be able to communicate well with policymakers, parents, the media, and the public.

School board members set the policies that make or break the achievements of other leaders and teachers. They have considerable power over the things that matter in a local school system, but often they are the leaders who have the least formal training for their roles.

Each of these jobs is changing dramatically, as states and school districts raise standards for student learning, reform curriculum and instruction, educate a more diverse student population, decentralize management, and confront citizens who are losing confidence in public education. Today's leaders face complex demands that they have not been trained for and that even the most experienced among them have difficulty meeting.

Purpose and Structure of the Policy Forum

To explore the major issues involved in creating effective leadership for today's schools, the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) held a 2-day forum on Educational Leadership in Washington, DC, on January 22 and 23, 1998. The 43 participants included successful and innovative superintendents, principals, and teachers from urban, suburban, and rural school districts, as well as prominent researchers in education leadership. Also in this group were state policymakers, education consultants, professional development specialists, representatives of foundations and school reform groups, U.S. Department of Education officials, and association leaders representing school boards, school administrators, principals, and teachers.

The Forum used a seminar approach. Leading practitioners and researchers made brief presentations which included information about successful schools and districts. This was followed by discussion by the whole group focused on the following questions:

- What is the definition of an effective leader for today's schools? What do case studies of successful districts tell us about what good leaders do and how we can support them?
- Which practices do successful leaders use to improve teaching and learning? How can we change practice to strengthen leadership?
- How can we help current leaders meet new definitions of leadership? How can we change professional development to strengthen leadership?
- What do changing definitions of effective leadership mean for preparation programs? How can we prepare new leaders?
- What are the research implications of changing definitions of educational leadership? Which key issues require further research?

- What are the policy implications of changing definitions of educational leadership? What steps can policymakers take to promote effective leadership?

This report summarizes the main ideas and suggestions raised by the Forum participants. It is meant as a starting point for further actions to improve leadership in U.S. schools. It should be noted that the case studies discussed at the Forum are not the only places in the country taking interesting approaches to leadership. Many other urban, suburban, and rural districts are using similar practices or are developing their own effective models.

What Is Effective Leadership for Today's Schools?

Forum participants identified several characteristics that define effective leadership for today's schools.

Instructional Leadership

Most participants agreed that the number one characteristic of an effective leader is the ability to provide instructional leadership. Yet this is also the role for which principals and superintendents are least well prepared; some studies suggest that as many as three-quarters of current principals are not skilled instructional leaders.

What is instructional leadership? In the case studies described at the Forum, superintendents and principals devoted the bulk of their time, energy, and talents to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders in these districts have a deep understanding of teaching and learning, including new teaching methods that emphasize problem solving and student construction of knowledge. Good instructional leaders have a strong commitment to success for *all* students, and are especially committed to improving instruction for groups of students who are not learning now.

In successful districts, the principals know how to evaluate instruction and give frank, powerful feedback that encourages teachers to teach better and students to learn more. These principals engage the whole school in continuous dialogue about what good teaching looks like and whether students are doing quality work. Often the work of everyone in the district, including the superintendent and principals, is judged in terms of teacher growth and demonstrable gains in student learning.

In these kinds of districts, the management responsibilities that traditionally define a principal's job are the baseline level of expectations, although some superintendents have tried desperately to reduce bureaucratic burdens to give principals more time for instructional duties. "We automatically expect the trains to run on time," explained Superintendent Michael Riley, from the suburban district of Bellevue, Washington, "but the real job is to move instruction forward."

Instructional leadership means different things for superintendents and principals, and takes different forms in different districts. In some effective districts, both superintendents and principals are a common presence in the classroom, with the principals being closely involved with the teaching in *every* classroom. In other districts, the superintendent sets the vision and goals for teaching and learning, while principals have the primary responsibility for instructional leadership. In some districts, principals serve more as instructional facilitators. For example, instead of spending considerable time in each classroom, a principal may designate teacher-leaders, who work directly with every teacher and meet often with the principal.

Whatever the arrangement, becoming a true instructional leader does not mean usurping the job of the teacher. Instead it means that leaders will provide teachers with informed feedback, guidance, support, and professional development that will help them do their jobs better.

Management Skills

Forum participants had different opinions about how much emphasis educational leaders should place on instructional leadership, relative to management skills and other critical competencies. Some very good leaders could not truly be called instructional leaders, but they are effective because they know how to "run interference"—how to nurture good teaching and learning amid external pressures. (But this does not apply to leaders who hide behind their heavy management load as an excuse for their lack of instructional involvement.) At the same time, some leaders who have excellent instructional leadership skills have run aground because they are not competent managers. Many aspects of our

educational system "are almost toxic to teaching and learning," as Joel Shawn of the California Center for School Restructuring said. In this environment, it takes more than just instructional leadership to keep good teaching alive and well.

Running a district or school today is an enormously demanding job. Good leaders must be good managers and knowledgeable about finance. To be successful, administrators must be able to negotiate their way through an overload of sometimes conflicting demands of local, state, and federal bureaucracies, parents, politicians, and constituent groups.

Many current superintendents and principals feel more comfortable with management than instruction because that's how they were trained. But the management skills required today are not the same ones taught in most traditional administration preparation programs. As Paul Houston of the American Association of School Administrators observed, today's leaders must shift their focus from the B's (budgets, books, buses, bonds, and buildings), to the C's (communication, collaboration, and community building).

Communication, Collaboration, and Community Building

An increasingly essential dimension of leadership is the ability to communicate and collaborate with people inside and outside schools. The "top-down" model of a superintendent or principal who makes decisions and charges others with carrying them out does not reflect the real distribution of power or the true source of motivation in today's schools and communities. Researchers who study educational leadership are coming to view leadership as a shared process involving leaders, teachers, students, parents, and community members. An effective leader can coalesce people around meaningful goals and inspire them to work together to accomplish these goals. A good leader has powerful ways of connecting with others and knows how to build constituencies that push for change and break down institutional barriers to teaching and learning.

This is not to say that every decision has to be made through consensus. When outsiders watch videos of interactions among the superintendent, principals, and teachers in New York City's Community District #2, a large urban district represented at the Policy Forum, they often remark that this looks like a highly

centralized, top-down system. But several teachers and principals in this system say they actually have considerable authority, and everyone in the school shares responsibility for the outcomes of learning. Some Forum participants suggested that a more authoritative leadership may be the right answer for certain districts, especially those with major problems or a climate of apathy.

Good two-way communication with school boards is another important skill for superintendents in today's environment. A superintendent must understand the board members' views and be able to work with the board to pursue a common vision for the district. Nevertheless, some Forum participants advised superintendents against spending so much effort trying to satisfy board demands that they cannot accomplish the main goals of improving teaching and learning.

Today's leaders also must be able to build a constituency for education reform in the larger community, which includes people with different views about public education. Superintendents may need public relations and media skills, as well as political savvy, to educate the public about what has to be done and persuade them that these goals are crucial to their children's future.

Schools in some neighborhoods are suffering because the community itself needs to be rebuilt. Education leaders must be able to work with other community agencies and organizations to create structures to address the social service needs of children and families.

Vision, Risk, and Change

Today's leaders must be able to articulate a vision of where their educational system is going and a plan for getting there. For Community District #2 in New York, for example, superintendent Tony Alvarado's vision was to see students in *all* classrooms doing the quality of work typical of students in the best classrooms.

Understanding how to bring about school change is another key leadership skill. Effective leaders spur change by taking risks themselves and by encouraging people to challenge their "mental models" about how things work and what is feasible. Sometimes a dramatic symbolic gesture can stimulate people to think differently about their roles. Diane Lam, Superintendent of the San Antonio

Public Schools, asked principals to come to the first day of back-to-school meetings equipped with ideas for a model community service project and dressed for outdoor work. Each team of principals received up to $50 to design and carry out a service project. The groups produced some wonderful ideas, and they also came away with a better sense of the service orientation of leadership.

Creating a Cadre of Qualified Leaders

All of these characteristics of leadership suggest that school districts are looking for administrators who can "walk on water," as one participant observed. Given this job description, it is not surprising that principals' and superintendents' positions are becoming less attractive. Many districts are already experiencing high turnover and shortages of qualified candidates, with more retirements projected over the next few years. And many current administrators do not have the training to fulfill new definitions of leadership.

At the same time as the supply of qualified people is diminishing, the pressures for educational reform are escalating. Unless public schools show some progress very soon, some parents and policymakers will find ideas like private school vouchers and privatization more attractive. We can't wait the several years it would take to overhaul preparation programs and turn out a whole new cadre of leaders. Solving these problems will take a combination of short-term and long-term actions on several fronts, according to Forum participants.

The first step is to get rid of the notion that every leader must wear a superhero's cape, as Elizabeth Eaves, a principal in Fair Oaks, California, observed. Although there are extraordinary leaders all over the country who can skillfully balance all the dimensions of leadership described above, the problem is not fundamentally one of locating the superstars. The real issue is how to structure leadership jobs and prepare people for them so that people who are proficient and committed, but not necessarily extraordinary, can succeed. "Leaders can be made; they aren't just born," remarked Susan Zelman of the Missouri Department of Education.

The next steps are to begin right now to make complementary changes in practice, professional development, preparation, research, and policy. Participant suggestions about how to do this are discussed in the following sections.

How Can We Change Practice to Strengthen Leadership?

Which changes in practice can strengthen, support, and reward good leadership? Forum participants described how some schools and districts are revising administrative responsibilities, professional relationships, and accountability systems to achieve these goals.

New Models for Instructional Leadership

Many of the changes in practice discussed at the Forum seek to sharpen the districts' focus on instructional leadership.

- In the Boston Public Schools, principals do walk throughs of each others' schools, using a specific protocol for observing instruction. One principal takes the role of facilitator, and after the walk through, the group suggests possible improvements for that school. The idea is to create a supportive, but challenging, peer group that will encourage administrators to recognize and solve instructional problems.

- In New York's Community District #2, principals visit classrooms in their own school and other schools, then meet regularly to critique what they saw. Distinguished principals receive extra pay to mentor their colleagues. Principals also participate in collegial study groups, where they read relevant research and discuss issues such as how to implement high standards.

- In Bellevue, Washington, both the superintendent and the principals regularly visit classrooms, with the goal of learning to recognize and describe good teaching and to provide better instructional feedback to teachers. After multiple classroom visits, the superintendent and principal discuss their observations, then meet with the teacher and eventually with the students. Teachers and principals in this district are continually revising curriculum and refining lessons. Principals also get together monthly to talk about instruction.

- In San Antonio, the superintendent visits every school, sets aside "listening time" for each principal, and holds small group meetings with principals about how to make school more successful. The superintendent also regularly teaches the same class of students.

What do these and other successful districts have in common when it comes to leadership? First, they have created "cross-role" structures that encourage principals and teachers to work together on instruction. Second, they have developed a systematic process for giving and receiving feedback. Third, they have created collegial circles of principals that focus on improved teaching and learning, rather than on day-to-day job frustrations. Mary Russo, a principal in Boston, said that when her district made a concerted effort to focus principal groups on what they can control instead of what they can't control, the discussions turned primarily to instructional issues and were much more motivating.

Instructional knowledge has traditionally received little emphasis in the hiring process for principals' jobs, but some districts are trying to change practice in this area. Community District #2 in New York asks candidates for principalships to observe several classrooms, then explain to the interviewers the kinds of feedback they would give the teachers. The interviewers quickly discovered that many people who did well in other stages of interviewing could not accurately describe the lessons they had seen.

New Forms of Accountability

Many school systems currently take a hierarchical approach to accountability that discourages cross-role feedback and fails to reward improvements in teaching and learning. Thus a critical step in improving leadership is to revise accountability systems so they reward instructional competence.

In Bellevue, Washington, principal effectiveness is judged by the amount and substance of teacher growth; good instructional leadership is "what separates the satisfactory principal from the less than satisfactory," said Superintendent Michael Riley. New York City's Community District #2 bases accountability for teachers and leaders on the school's progress toward meeting student performance goals. Underlying this approach is the concept of "reciprocity and capacity," as Richard

Elmore of Harvard University calls it. This means that the leaders who evaluate an individual's performance against expectations have an equal obligation to provide the capacity that enables that person to do the job. For example, a superintendent who makes judgments about a school's annual performance has a responsibility to provide the principal with relief from administrative burdens and with substantial professional development opportunities to help those who need to do better. Those who cannot do the job after having ample opportunities for growth must step down.

Other districts evaluate principals in terms of teacher assessments of their instructional leadership, or give bonuses based on the quality and quantity of principals' instructional observations. The important element is not so much the specific accountability mechanism, but the fact there are clear goals and mechanisms to keep people focused on instructional improvement and encourage them to reflect regularly on their own performance.

Reducing Administrative Overload

How do effective practitioners stay focused on instruction and still make sure schools run smoothly? Some Forum participants felt that districts need to give principals greater relief from administrative overload. Central offices could be mainly responsible for noninstructional management duties that keep principals out of the classroom, such as budgets, parent complaints, and union issues. Principals could form school clusters to craft ways of sharing responsibilities and reducing their loads.

When central office support is wanting, principals try to handle the overload as best they can. Sheila Ford, a principal in the District of Columbia, said she reserves certain times during the day for classroom observations, and has spread the word to school staff and parents that this time is sacred. Another administrator reported putting in a box the mountain of paperwork that comes into her office, and only doing the essentials; the paperwork left at the end of the year consists of things no one called about or really cared about.

How Can We Change Professional Development to Strengthen the Skills of Current Leaders?

Preparing current administrators for new modes of leadership will require changes in content and delivery of professional development. Many formal professional development options for principals do not address the skills that leaders really need or they neglect recent research on effective teaching and schooling. Leaders in some districts have tried to compensate by forming grassroots networks for collegial learning. The challenge now is to expand these efforts, so they reach more people and last longer, without destroying the sense of ownership of one's own learning that makes these networks effective.

New Models of Professional Development

Schools and districts are implementing new approaches to help administrators grow intellectually and acquire new skills. In many districts, professional development is virtually indistinguishable from daily practice; roles and relationships are structured so that people learn continuously as they go about their work. Here are some examples of professional development highlighted at the Forum:

- At summer institutes in Bellevue, Washington, principals evaluate videotapes of teachers teaching; they are looking less at the specific methods the teacher is using than at what the children are learning. Through this type of close observation, principals come to see the kinds of teaching that produce higher student learning, and they gain practice in talking with teachers about effective and ineffective instruction.

- In New York's Community District #2, principal support groups study one important topic—such as standards for evaluating student work—throughout the whole school year. Small groups of principals investigate various aspects of this topic, then exchange information with the larger group. The principals also

spend a part of the summer doing individual research on a critical issue, then report to the larger group in August. The idea is to build a culture that rewards individual and group learning.

- Principals in Boston have created their own networks to work collaboratively on a "big idea": how to improve literacy in every school in the district. Having a unifying idea like literacy helps principals to become more concrete in their reading, study, and discussion, and to look more closely at the quality of work students are doing.

How are these districts paying for these forms of professional development, which are often more intensive and expensive than traditional workshops? Usually by reallocating existing resources. Community District #2 spends about 6 percent of its budget on professional development for teachers and principals—much higher than the average share. Much of this funding has come from cutting the numbers of district-level administrators, assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, and other midlevel administrative staff. In Boston, principals have supported their professional development by pooling a small share of resources from each school.

Key Elements of Professional Development

Forum participants identified key elements that ought to guide changes in professional development for leaders. In particular, they recommended that professional development for administrators should:

- be based on a few core standards for what leaders should know and be able to do—with the chief standard being a deep understanding of teaching, learning, and school improvement;
- take place in the participant's own school or context, rather than being delivered from outside;
- put people to work on solving real problems;
- use networks of peers, or "critical friends";

- be controlled by the participants; and
- incorporate research findings about good teaching and productive schools.

How Can We Prepare New Leaders?

Preparing tomorrow's leaders is another essential step. Forum participants were outspoken in their views that university preparation programs for educational leaders are not doing the job. Much of their curriculum centers on management, finance, legal issues, and other state-required content, with instructional and school improvement issues given short shrift. Often the faculty in these programs do not model what we know about good teaching—so that an Ed.D. candidate might well learn about classroom methods for cooperative learning from a professor teaching in a lecture mode. Opportunities for learning leadership in real school settings are limited to fixed periods, rather than infused throughout the curriculum. Candidates are deemed ready for a leadership job based on how many credits they have accumulated, rather than how well they perform in a school situation.

Addressing these shortcomings in preparation requires more than just changing university curricula. It will entail coordinated changes in certification, licensing, and hiring, and is unlikely to happen without a shakeup of the "cartel" of institutions with a vested interest in the status quo, including universities, state departments of education, professional associations, and school districts.

Several suggestions emerged from the Forum about how to improve preparation programs. Very few, if any, university preparation programs have incorporated all of the recommended changes, but some school districts and universities are trying out improvements on a more limited scale.

More Practical Leadership Opportunities

People learn leadership by actually leading—and by having simultaneous opportunities to reflect on what they are doing, and to talk about the process with others. Participants in the Policy Forum advocated bringing a more practical and realistic orientation to preparation programs. Instead of learning mostly through

traditional university courses, leadership candidates would spend much of their time in schools, learning through exposure to real challenges, interaction with successful leaders, and guided inquiry into real problems.

For example, Stanford University prepares prospective principals by combining three summers of resident study at the university with two intervening school years of field work at the home school. The field work component, which is overseen by a university field supervisor and an administrator in the home school, helps participants learn to critically examine their school culture, supervise and evaluate teachers, and lead change initiatives.

Implementing this kind of preparation will entail new kinds of partnerships between school districts and universities. The district offers a setting replete with real problems and a host of experienced people to interact with. A university can provide the intellectual foundations and can encourage students to think deeply and creatively about what they are experiencing. For this approach to work on a large scale, however, universities must develop incentive structures that reward faculty for collaborating with schools. Supervision apprenticeships are one promising approach. These arrangements allow prospective leaders to face the gamut of challenges found in real school districts, but with the guidance of an experienced mentor. Mentors also gain new insights into leadership from these relationships, as apprentices bring fresh perspectives to old problems.

Some preparation programs are building their learning around grounded research, which means that leadership candidates spend considerable time in schools investigating a meaningful problem of real import to educators:

- Claremont Graduate University is preparing urban superintendents through a model that includes Socratic seminars on urban issues, strategic briefings and group discussions of leadership, and grounded research projects.

- At Harvard University's summer leadership institute, cross-role teams of teachers and administrators work on common problems, so that people understand that leadership is a shared responsibility.

Instructional Expertise

Preparation programs also should place much stronger emphasis on instructional issues, according to many Forum participants. Some participants even felt that principals should know as much about instruction as a nationally board certified teacher. Preparation programs could build the instructional skills of leaders by incorporating more classroom teaching experiences into their training.

Growing Your Own Leaders

Traditional preparation programs are unlikely to produce enough principals and superintendents to fill impending shortages. According to Forum participants, school districts must expand the pool of new leaders by "growing their own"—recognizing potential leaders in the district and giving them structured opportunities to demonstrate their skills and build their expertise.

- San Antonio Public Schools created "instructional guides" in each school—expert teachers with leadership potential who help others improve their teaching. Instructional guides receive intensive professional development, and the superintendent has made clear that she expects many future principals to come from their ranks.

- Community District #2 is working with New York University to develop a program to certify excellent teachers with leadership potential as principals. Participants are identified and recruited by current principals. The district pays their way toward certification.

Institutional Support

Right now many leadership candidates pursue degrees through part-time study, on evenings, weekends, and summers, and pay for it themselves. This is far from the ideal of providing leadership candidates with stipends and release time, so they can truly focus on learning. Some school districts and states are trying to remedy this by paying tuition, stipends, or even a full salary to teachers with leadership potential, to allow them to spend a year or 2 in a preparation and apprenticeship program. North Carolina, for example, pays principals a $20,000 annual

scholarship to pursue advanced degrees and leadership training. These types of scholarship programs often create stronger incentives for both the participant and the funding agency to see that the outcome is successful.

Addressing Inadequate Programs

A difficult step in reforming administrator preparation is to strengthen university leadership preparation programs, and in some cases to eliminate those that aren't working. For example, North Carolina has required all the universities in the state with a leadership program to submit proposals to reform their programs. The number of these programs has already declined from 12 to 7.

Some participants felt that university preparation programs were unlikely to initiate productive reforms without a wake-up call from the outside. One suggestion was for school districts, businesses, and other players to develop their own preparation and professional development programs in competition with universities. If decisions about which administrators to hire are based on a candidate's competence, not credit accumulation, alternative programs could pose a serious threat that would spur traditional university preparation programs to do better.

What Are the Implications for Research?

Research can contribute greatly to reforming educational leadership, particularly research in school sites involving partnerships of researchers and practitioners. Many of the professional development and preparation models described in this report are also models of field-based research. They are helping to expand our knowledge of effective approaches, distill common themes from successful sites, and identify strategies for putting good models into wider practice. But those who have studied successful sites suggest that it is not enough to hand practitioners a list of research-validated models. It is equally important that practitioners work through the *process* themselves, in their own context. The ultimate goal is to make inquiry a regular part of the practice of leadership.

The Forum identified several key questions for additional research in educational leadership:

- How effective is the current credentialing system for leaders? Why do some people who are certified for principals' jobs not pursue those jobs?
- To what extent are hiring decisions based on competent performance?
- What are the main characteristics of administrative practice in high-performing school systems? What mechanisms do good leaders use to influence instruction from the system level?
- How do successful districts make the difficult choices necessary to channel more funding into leadership development?
- Which administrative structures work best in large or geographically dispersed districts, where it is harder to sustain collegial relations among principals, teachers, and superintendents?
- How can we develop a broader repertoire of effective strategies, including some less expensive ones, for providing professional development for leaders?

- Which kinds of evidence of student performance (such as test scores, performance-based assessment, and samples of student work) are the best indicators of the quality of instructional leadership? Which are the least telling?

What Are the Implications for Policy?

Local, state, and national policymakers have not come to grips with the problems of educational leadership described in this report. Many think that "leadership is something that just happens," as Pennsylvania state legislator Ron Cowell noted, and do not realize how their policy decisions affect the quality of leadership or how leadership relates to other educational reforms. Even among policymakers who do pay attention to leadership needs, instructional skills are a low priority compared with management skills and fiscal stewardship. Pessimism and lack of consensus among educators about how to address leadership needs exacerbates the feeling among policymakers that there is little they can do to improve the current state of leadership.

Educational leaders and other concerned groups could help policymakers play a more supportive role by being clearer about what they want and need. For example, educators could define more clearly what leadership involves, and perhaps develop standards for the skills and knowledge that administrators, superintendents, and school board members should have. They could also revise standards for effective administrator preparation programs. They could identify common principles for designing professional development and preparation that are subject to policy influence.

Principals, superintendents, and, in some cases, teachers are also gaining more direct influence over policy as a result of governance models that decentralize decisionmaking. Rather than waiting for others to act, local leaders can use this authority to strengthen their own profession.

The Forum produced a list of several options for policymakers (including educational leaders themselves) to consider at the local, state, and national levels.

Options for Local Policymakers

- Make changes in school and district policies that strengthen local leadership and empower principals to take charge of their own profession.

- Establish collegial networks and "critical friends" programs that will reach every principal and engage school leaders in inquiry about specific instructional issues.

- Use multiple measures, including performance, to assess administrator effectiveness.

- Develop programs to identify and cultivate indigenous leaders from early in their careers. Create incentives for veteran principals—such as higher pay and reductions in other responsibilities—to encourage them to identify and mentor teachers with leadership skills.

- Revise local administrator hiring policies to make them more explicit about performance expectations.

- Create a districtwide leadership academy where new and experienced leaders and other professionals can work in teams on school improvement.

- Explore radical reforms to better focus professional development on the challenges found in real schools.

- Involve the local private sector in efforts to develop new leaders. Create partnerships with universities, business, and others to make local schools into professional development schools.

- Develop alternative routes to leader certification.

- Provide professional development to school boards and hold them more accountable for creating policies that support effective leadership and higher student learning.

- Give schools greater flexibility to create incentives for leaders and teachers to develop their instructional expertise. These incentives could include release time, job restructuring, greater flexibility over resource allocation, and others. Give schools flexibility to buy professional development services from the best provider.

- Create an accountability and incentive system that links everyone's evaluation to expectations for student learning.
- Rethink the time demands placed on administrators.
- Ensure that all staff meetings focus primarily on instruction.
- Use the influence of those who have the greatest stake in new leadership policies—superintendents, principals, and teachers—to develop these new policies.

Options for State Policymakers

- Rechannel state higher education funding to provide generous two-phased grants to institutions: the first phase would be provided when candidates are recruited and enrolled in a leadership preparation program, and the second phase would be allocated when graduates are placed in principals' positions.
- Authorize full-time, 2-year fellowships for senior teachers to pursue national board certification and train for a leadership position through a site-based preparation program.
- Involve private sector representatives in planning incentives to reform administrator preparation.
- Revise state standards for leadership preparation programs based on the new standards recommended by national professional associations for administrators, and require these programs to collaborate with practitioners.
- Mandate an external quality review of all leadership preparation programs and eliminate those that are not working.
- Make the criteria and assessments for principal certification more relevant to the skills actually needed to do the job, and align them with new standards for educational leadership suggested by national professional associations.

- Establish comprehensive professional development centers that would be designed and operated through collaborations of government and business.

- Create principals' networks and other collegial opportunities for professional learning.

- Fund demonstration programs that encourage school districts and higher education institutions to collaborate on new approaches to professional development.

- Encourage local districts to explore different governance models that promote new definitions of educational leadership.

Options for National Leaders and Policymakers

- Create a high-powered national commission on leadership—similar to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future—that would highlight the need for reforms in educational leadership. This commission could suggest systemic strategies for improvement and could identify good models of preparation and professional development.

- Continue the work of national professional associations to develop national standards for leadership preparation and certification that are rigorous and instructionally oriented. Support the development of a national model for board certification of administrators.

- Support alternative approaches to certification that reward expertise as well as course taking.

- Fund alternative professional development approaches for educational leaders.

- With involvement of business organizations, develop model school-business-university partnerships for preparing and strengthening the instructional leadership of principals.

- Provide federal funding to demonstrate different effective approaches to leadership development.

- Provide grants to states to design model state reforms of accreditation and certification of leadership development.

- Develop academies to identify and encourage young professionals with leadership potential and train them to model good practice.

- Support research and dissemination of research findings.

- Enact legislation patterned after the "Land Grant" Act to encourage reform of leadership preparation programs.

- Work to create a broad public constituency that recognizes the need for reform and will advocate for long-term changes in educational leadership. Establish "consensus panels" to sort out what we know about educational leadership and hold public dialogues to educate citizens.

Summary and Conclusion

Effective leadership is the forgotten imperative of education reform. Good leaders can create the vision and climate that encourages everyone in the system to reach higher and accomplish more, while inept leaders can stop promising reforms in their tracks. The OERI Leadership Policy Forum identified several issues and actions that could help the nation develop more effective educational leaders. The main messages of the Forum are summarized as follows:

The jobs of school superintendents, principals, and school board members are changing dramatically with reforms in education and changes in society. *Today's schools demand new kinds of skills and knowledge from education leaders, including skills that many current leaders have not mastered.* Chief among these is instructional leadership—the ability to recognize and foster good teaching and high-level learning. Management skills are another area of change; today's complex school environments and diverse communities require greater skills in communication, collaboration, and community building.

Successful districts around the country are testing new models of leadership that bring together superintendents, principals, and teachers to do cross-role work on improving instruction. These models help people learn to give and receive instructional feedback, and some even base accountability on improved teaching and learning. In several districts, principals and superintendents are also forming collegial networks, or "critical friends" groups, in which they evaluate each other and improve together.

Neither organized professional development programs nor formal preparation programs are adequately preparing leaders to meet their new job demands. *Some newer effective models for preparation and professional development give people practical opportunities to build instructional leadership and other important skills in real school contexts.* In these approaches, current and potential leaders learn by

observing and evaluating effective leaders. They also work on real problems encountered in an actual school or district. Professional development is controlled by the participants, rather than "delivered" from outside.

Many school districts are having trouble finding qualified leadership candidates. At the same time, many people with potential to be good leaders are finding these positions less attractive because of the unreasonable demands they entail. *Some school districts are trying to "grow their own" leaders by identifying potential principals in their own districts and giving them structured opportunities to build their expertise.* But another critical part of the equation is to reduce the administrative overload on leaders, so the job can be done by people who are competent but not superheroes.

Researchers, policymakers, and leaders at the local, state, and national local levels have key roles to play in building effective leaders. State policymakers, to cite just a few examples, could overhaul administrator preparation and certification, stop funding ineffective preparation programs, and support new modes of professional development. National leaders could establish a high-powered commission to develop systemic strategies for leadership reform. Local policymakers, as well as principals and superintendents, could revise their policies for professional development, hiring, and accountability and could adopt incentives for people to try more creative and effective approaches to leadership.

If education reform is going to succeed, the nation cannot wait long to make the changes in educational leadership discussed in this report. The ideas in this document can be a starting point for action.

Participants in the Policy Forum on Educational Leadership

Joseph Aguerrebere
Program Officer
Ford Foundation
320 East 43rd Street
New York, NY 10017

Anthony Alvarado
Community Superintendent
Community School District #2
333 7th Avenue—7th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Ronald Anson
Research Analyst
National Institute on Educational
Governance, Finance, Policymaking,
and Management
U.S. Department of Education
OERI
Washington, DC 20208

Ron Areglado
Associate Executive Director for Programs
National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Denise Borders
The McKenzie Group, Inc.
Suite 1100
1100 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Leo Casey
Teacher
Clara Barton High School
901 Classon Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225

Michael Copland
School of Education
Stanford University
637 Alvarado Row
Stanford, CA 94305

Ronald Cowell
Legislator
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
House Box 202020—Room 115
South Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2020

Elizabeth Demarest
Research Analyst
National Institute on Educational
Governance, Finance, Policymaking,
and Management
U.S. Department of Education
OERI
Washington, DC 20208

Daniel Domenech
Superintendent of Schools
Fairfax County Public Schools
10700 Page Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22030

Darrel Drury
Director, Policy Research
National School Boards Association
1680 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Elizabeth Eaves
Principal
Fair Oaks Elementary School
10700 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Richard Elmore
Professor
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Gutman Library, 4th floor
6 Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138

Julio Feldman
Principal
Central East Middle School
238 East Wyoming Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19120

Sandra Terril Flynn
Associate Professor
College of Education
Murray State University
Murray, KY 42071

Sheila Ford
Principal
Horace Mann Elementary School
D.C. Public Schools
4430 Newark Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Lenora Hay
Director of Professional Development
and Innovation
JCPS/ Gheens Academy
4425 Preston Highway
Louisville, KY 40204

Tom Houlihan
President
North Carolina Partnership for Excellence
304 North Second Street
Smithfield, NC 27577

Paul Houston
Executive Director
American Association of
School Administrators
1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209

Deborah Inman
Director
National Institute on Educational
Governance, Finance, Policymaking,
and Management
U.S. Department of Education
OERI
Washington, DC 20208

Judith Johnson
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and
Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW—Rm. 4000
Washington, DC 20202-6100

Nancy Kober
Writer
741 Lexington Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Thomas Koerner
Deputy Executive Director
National Association of Secondary
School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191

Dawn Krusemark
Senior Associate
American Federation of Teachers
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Diana Lam
Superintendent
San Antonio Independent School District
141 Lavaca Street
San Antonio, TX 78210

Ginny V. Lee
Senior Program Associate
WestEd
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

Bruce Matsui
Associate Professor
Claremont Graduate School
Center for Educational Studies
150 East 10th Street
Claremont, CA 91711

Nancy Mohr
Consultant
222 Park Avenue, South #10A
New York, NY 10003

Hunter Moorman
Hunter Moorman and Associates
930 South 16th Street
Arlington, VA 22202

Joseph Murphy
Professor
Peabody College
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203

William Powell
Superintendent
Strasburg School District
P.O. Box 207
Strasburg, CO 80136

Michael Riley
Superintendent
Bellevue School District
12111 Northeast 1st Street
Bellevue, WA 98005

Mary Russo
Principal
Samuel W. Mason Elementary School
30 Avon Street
Boston, MA 02130

Joseph Schneider
Deputy Executive Director
American Association of
School Administrators
1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209

Paul Schwarz
Principal in Residence
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue—Room 6231
Washington, DC 20202

Sharon Shaulis
Principal
Coral Springs Middle School
10300 West Wiles Road
Coral Springs, FL 33076

Joel Shawn
Executive Director
California Center for School
Restructuring
9300 Emperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242-2890

Jacqueline Simmons
Senior Program Associate
School Change and Inquiry Program
4940 South Eastend Avenue
Chicago, IL 60615

Oscar Uribe
Program Manager
National Center for Innovation
1201 16th Street, NW, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036

Michael Usdan
President
Institute for Educational Leadership
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Ronald Walker
Associate Director
ATLAS Communications
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02158

Susan Zelman
Deputy Commissioner of Education
Missouri State Department of Education
205 Jefferson Street
Jefferson, MO 65102

ISBN 0-16-050063-X

90000

9 780160 500633

United States
Department of Education
Washington, DC 20208–5510

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Department of Education
Permit No. G–17

Standard Mail (A)

GFI 1999–9501